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Bourgeois, Florence

How paper making  
came to the colonies.

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"Colonial Paper making"

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HOW PAPER MAKING CAME TO THE COLONIES

Florence Bourgeois

If you had happened to be one of the John's or Priscilla's who came to this country on the Mayflower or to William Penn's colony in Philadelphia or, even if you had been better born in one of those places in the early days, here are some of the things you wouldn't have had:

your own writing paper  
tablets, notebooks, or drawing paper  
magazines  
cardboard boxes  
your own books  
card games  
paper favors for your parties  
birthday and Christmas cards  
paper bags and wrapping papers  
picnic plates and napkins

Why? Because, no paper was made in the colonies and not much in Europe. Only a little paper was brought from England for the grown-ups to write on.

Probably you wouldn't have missed all your paper things, however, even if children in the old country had had them. You would have been too busy. First,

RECREATION TRAINING SCHOOL  
107 WASHINGTON STREET  
NEW YORK CITY

Flourish Bourgeois

If you had happened to be one of the Jews, or  
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or to William Penn's colony in England-Irish or, even  
if you had been better born in one of these places in  
the early days, there are some of the things you wouldn't  
have had:

Your own writing paper

tablets, notebooks, or drawing paper

manuscripts

cardboard boxes

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Why? Because, no paper was made in the colonies and  
not much in Europe. Only a little paper was brought  
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Probably you wouldn't have missed all your paper  
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had had them. You would have been too busy. First,



there were forests to be cleared away; then, houses to build and furnish and crops to start growing. Father and mother would have needed your help. Later, you might have gone to a "dame school" kept by a woman who lived near you in her house. There you would have watched the "dame" write arithmetic lessons and spelling with a stick in the sand on the floor! You would have had charcoal to write on birch bark, but no paper.

After a while it took less time for the grown-up people to get food, clothing, and shelter, especially in the larger towns and they began to need paper for writing and printing. Of course, the printers needed it most. One of them, named William Bradford, who lived in Philadelphia found a paper-maker and started the first paper mill in 1690. The paper-maker was called "Willém Ruddinghuysen" in German or "William Rittenhouse" in English. He had come from Germany with his three children Nicholas or Claus, Gerhardt, and Elizabeth. Claus almost certainly helped around the mill and when he grew old enough became his father's partner. Whether Gerhardt and Elizabeth helped in the mill, I do not know. I do know that when the three Rittenhouse children grew up they had children of their own who had children in turn and that, even now, there are Rittenhouses in Philadelphia. These different Rittenhouses helped the city to grow and now a

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park-like square is named after them - Rittenhouse Square. Philadelphia children play there on clear days. They play too in Fairmount Park where the first paper mill once stood (in Germantown then). Here is a funny old poem printed by William Bradford himself in 1692.

"The German-Town, of which I spoke before,  
Which is, at least, in length one Mile and More,  
Where lives High-German People, and Low-Dutch,  
Whose Trade in weaving Linnin Cloth is much,  
There grows the Flax, as also you may know.  
That from the same they do divide the Tow;  
Their Trade fits well within their Habitation,  
We find Conveniences for their Occupation,  
One Trade brings in imployment for another,  
So that we may suppose each Trade a Brother;  
From Linnin Rags good Paper doth derive,  
The First Trade keeps the second Trade alive:  
Without the first the second cannot be,  
Therefore since these two can so well agree,  
Convenience doth approve to place them nigh,  
One in the German-Town doth stand,  
So that the Flax, which first springs from the land,  
First Flax, then Yarn, and then they must begin,  
To weave the same which they took pains to spin.  
Also when on our backs it is well worn,



park-like square is named after them - Rittenhouse Square.  
Philadelphia children play there on clear days. They  
play too in Belmont Park where the first paper mill  
once stood (in Germantown then). Here is a funny old  
poem printed by William Bradford himself in 1832.

"The Germantown, of which I spoke before,  
which is, at least, in length one mile and more,  
where lives High-Germans People, and Low-Dutch,  
whose Trade in weaving Linens Cloth is much,  
There grows the Flax, as also you may know,  
That from the same they do divide the Tow;  
Their Trade fits well within their Habitation,  
We find Conveniences for their Occupation,  
One Trade brings in Employment for another,  
So that we may suppose each Trade a Brother;  
From Linen Bags good Paper hath derive,  
The First Trade keeps the second Trade alive;  
Without the first the second cannot be,  
Therefore since these two can so well agree,  
Conveniences both approve to place them nigh,  
One in the Germantown both stand,  
So that the Flax, which first springs from the land,  
First Flax, then Yarn, and then they must begin,  
To weave the same which they took pains to spin,  
Also when on our backs it is well worn,



some of the same remains Ragged and Torn;  
 Then of those Rags our paper it is made,  
 Which in process of time doth waste and fade;  
 So what comes from the Earth appeareth plain,  
 The same in Time returns to Earth again."

Do you notice that it tells why the mill was built near  
 German-town?

We know much more about  
 another mill that was built  
 at Chester, near Philadelphia  
 a little later. Outside this  
 mill looked more like an old  
 grey stone and wood barn  
 than the paper mills we see  
 today. English ivy grew over  
 the roof. Thomas Willcox,  
 the owner, had brought it from  
 England and planted it there.

That is why it was called Ivy  
 Mill. This is just what was inside of Ivy Mill in the  
 year 1732:



Ivy MILL 1729

"A mortice and (ha)mners, a Vatt and Pott,  
 two Stuff Tubbs, a Rag Knife and Block, one press  
 paper mould and a pair of Shop paper moulds, Seventy-  
 seven shop paper felts, two press paper Planks and







Rag wheel, a screw and Box, a Glazeing Engine, two pairing knives, two little pails with iron hoops, one smal ads, two pairing frames--one pairing Bench, three cocks, two troughs, one winch, a halfting bench, two tressels, a Iron Barr, six posts and Eighteen Rails for hanging of paper, one hundred polls for hanging paper, one pad, one pair of Stilliards, a Box for Paper-Hanging stool, one hundred and sixty Tap pots, twenty cogs and three washers."

You can see from this list that paper was made almost exactly as you make it except that the bowls, molds, and so on had to be much larger. (Of course, if you've never made any paper, you'll want to have the fun of doing it very soon. On the last page you can find out where to get a recipe.)



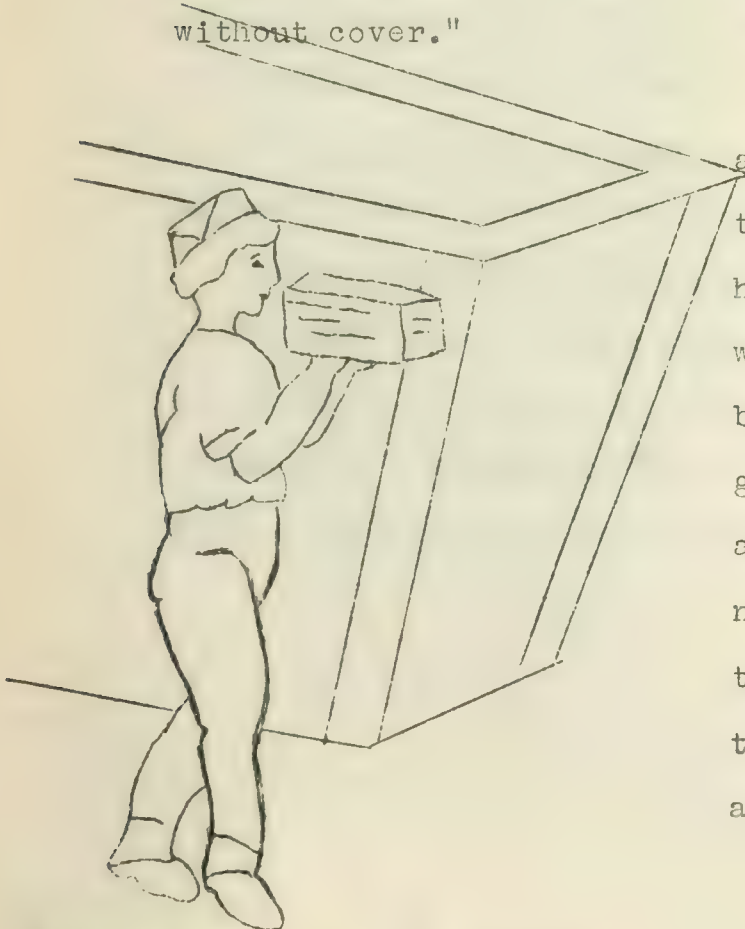
Ivy Mills used this  
water-mark

The vat was filled with water and the rags thrown in to be beaten with heavy hammers. When the pulp was ready, the mold was dipped into it to form a sheet, a piece of felt was placed on the pulp sheet and more pulp added; so that several layers of paper could be pressed at once. Then they were taken out, sheet by sheet, and hung on poles to dry in a drying loft or shed.





As the Colonies grew and the towns and little cities had more business to carry on they needed more and more paper. They had kept on getting it from England as well as from their own mills, but England taxed paper along with tea and the colonists refused to buy it. Paper was harder to get than ever after. States loaned people money to build mills and offered prizes, too, to encourage builders. The North Carolina congress in 1775 offered, "a premium of two hundred and fifty pounds be given to the first person who shall erect and build a mill for manufacturing of Brown, whited Brown and good writing paper." In the same year a governor wrote, "Having very little paper left, I am under the necessity of sending this (letter) without cover."



More mills were built and started, but sometimes they had to close. They had trouble finding workmen who knew how to make paper, but the greatest trouble was getting RAGS. Mill owners advertised for them and the newspapers themselves did, too. The Boston News-Letter the first paper in the country advertised, for instance, "The

Boys worked in the paper mills





Cart will go through Boston, before the end of next month, to collect Rags for the Paper Mills at Milton, when all people that will encourage the Paper Manufacture may dispose of them." .....

"Rags are as beauties that concealed lie,  
 But when as paper, how they charm the eye,  
 Pray save your rags, new beauties to discover,  
 For paper truly every one's a lover.  
 By Pen and Press such Knowledge is displayed  
 As wouldn't exist, if Paper were not made.  
 Wisdom of things, mysterious, divine,  
 Illustriously doth on Paper shine."

Not only newspaper and mill-owners begged for rags, but even groups of men like Benjamin Franklin who were members of the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, who offered prizes, and the colonial governments, also.

So, although paper-making had come to the Colonies it was still hard to get paper for letters and books even, all because of rags, rags, rags! But, paper making was waiting for something different from rags to make it grow. Can you guess what that was?





You can find out how to make paper at home or in school by getting the Recipes for Paper Making from the Industrial Arts Cooperative Service, 519 West 121 St., New York City.

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These facts about the history of paper-making and many more are to be found in:

Maddox, H. A. Paper--Its history, sources, and manufacture, Sir Isaac Pitman & Son, Ltd., London, 1916.

Weeks, Lyman Horace, A History of Paper-manufacturing in the United States, Lockwood Trade Journal Co., New York, 1916.

Paper Making as conducted in Western Massachusetts, Clark W. Bryan & Co., Springfield, Mass. 1874 (written for the Springfield Union).

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The drawings are from pictures in Weeks' History of Paper-manufacturing in the United States.











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